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INITIAL CHINESE COMMUNIST REACTIONS TO THE U.S.
WHITE PAPER ON CHINA

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SUMMARY

The issuance of the US White Paper on China has been interpreted by the Chinese Communists as a sinister political move. Although Communist editors have addressed themselves almost exclusively to the letter of transmittal (which may have been the only complete "part" of the White Paper available in Communist China at that time), their comments apply to the White Paper as a whole. These comments iterate four major themes: (1) the US still holds "imperialist" ambitions with respect to China; (2) US imperialism now employs honeyed words and actions that attempt to subvert or pervert the new Communist regime; (3) an especially dangerous manifestation of the new "subtle" approach is the appeal to "democratic individualism"; and (4) underlying this appeal is an erroneous theory of Chinese history that is in basic contradiction to that of the Chinese Communists and Marxists in general.

A principal goal of all editorials appears, in fact, to have been the combating of the "pernicious" theory of "revolution" set forth in Secretary Acheson's letter of transmittal, for in this theory the Communists perceive a mortal threat to their dominance of intellectual China. The Communists view modern China as the product of continuous and deterministic "class war" that inevitably results in Communism.

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The US, in contrast, has posited the existence of vast social forces -- overpopulation and the impact of the west -- over which no group may have control and for which no ideology may hold the explanation. In so explaining China, the US has according to the apparent Communist view, undermined one important basis of Communist survival.

In addition to the press reactions noted above, the issuance of the US White Paper appears to have precipitated the imposition by Chinese Communist authorities of further restrictions upon the intellectual freedom of the non-Communist liberals. The White Paper's appeal to "democratic individualism" presumably heightened the Communist suspicion that many liberals remained sympathetic to American political ideals. In any case, many Chinese "independents" came forward during August of this year to declare their firm allegiance to the new Communist regime and to disown their former mistaken respect for American democracy.

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INITIAL CHINESE COMMUNIST REACTIONS TO THE U.S.
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INTRODUCTION

The Chinese Communists first commented on the US Department of State's White Paper on China¹ in a New China News Agency statement of August 13, 1949. With this introduction, they launched into a series of featured discussions of the White Paper, via press, radio, and public forums, that reached peak intensity toward the end of August. Although the majority of the discussions were devoted to Secretary Acheson's letter of transmittal to the President, which may have been the only complete "part" of the publication available in Communist China,² the criticisms made reveal the lines of attack against the paper as a whole.

1. United States Relations With China, released August 5, 1949.
2. About two weeks before the White Paper was published, air copies of the letter of transmittal were sent to all US Department of State posts in Nationalist China. On the day the paper was issued, a wireless copy of the letter of transmittal and summaries of each of the chapters were sent to Tai-p'ei, where the summaries of the chapters were translated into Chinese number code and rebroadcast to China, including Shanghai. Two weeks later the Department of State posts in Nationalist China received their first actual copies of the paper. An unspecified number of copies were sent to Shanghai, but it is not known whether they were received or whether copies are available to the Chinese Communists.

On August 18, 1949, the New China News Agency issued a "chapter-by-chapter" analysis of the text, which appears to have been based solely on the broadcast summary. As far as is known, only the letter of transmittal has been reproduced in full in Chinese Communist newspapers. The reproduction appeared in the papers of August 28, 1949.

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Six major editorials and numerous comments by party and "front" groups comprise the initial Communist reaction to the White Paper. The six editorials, which are evidently part of a series that will be concluded later, are labeled as follows:

1. "A Confession That Could Not Be Helped," August 13, 1949.
2. "Discard Illusions, Prepare For A Struggle," August 15.
3. "Bye Bye Leighton Stuart," August 19.
4. "Fourth Comment On The White Paper," August 29.
5. "US Friendship and Principles Reviewed," August 31.
6. "Theory of Revolution's Cause Refuted," September 19.

Specific comments were also issued by a number of Communist-controlled organizations: the All-China Writers and Artists' Federation (August 18, 1949), the All-China Democratic Youth Federation (August 18), the All-China Federation of Labor (August 21), and the All-China Democratic Women's Federation (August 22). Moreover, denunciations were offered by Communist affiliated or "neutral" groups: the Kuomintang Revolutionary Committee (August 21), the China Association For Promoting Democracy (August 21), the Democratic League (August 24), Yenching University professors (August 23), and Tsinghua University professors (August 29).

A. The Communist Interpretation of the White Paper

The Communists read the following sinister implications into the letter of transmittal and accordingly into the White Paper as a whole. First, they believe that, despite overt defeat, the US still has

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aggressive "imperialist" intentions toward China. However, as shown by the White Paper, US "imperialism" now follows a new line, that of subverting the Chinese Communist regime. The chief danger of this line, in the Communist way of thinking, is its appeal to "democratic individualists" (e.g., neutral, American-educated intellectuals) within China. Finally, the Communists hold that the concepts providing this appeal are derived from a false view of history, that of "bourgeois idealism," a view that must be heartily combated.

1. The Aggressive Intentions of the US. The following excerpts reiterate the basic Communist suspicion of the "aggressive intentions" of the US:

"The U.S. Government is freely pursuing and has always firmly pursued aggressive aims on China."¹

"The American 'White Paper' in fact is a declaration of war against the peoples of China and we cannot ignore it."²

"American aggressive policy is directed against several parts of the world. They are mainly Europe, Asia, and the Americas. China is the center of gravity of Asia. She is a large country with a population of 475 million. Once China is occupied, all Asia would fall to the United States.

"If its Asiatic front were consolidated, American imperialism would be able to concentrate its forces to attack and defeat Europe. Its front in the Americas is considered by American imperialism as comparatively stable. This is the (shrewd) calculation of the American aggressive plan."³

1. FBIB, Daily Report, p. PPP-7, August 15, 1949, RESTRICTED.

2. Ibid., p. BBB-9, August 15, 1949, RESTRICTED.

3. Ibid., p. PPP-1, August 22, 1949, RESTRICTED.

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2. The New Form of American Aggression. The precise suspicion of the Communists as to American plans for subversion is introduced with the following statement:

"But even if the U.S. Government has given up all hope in the Kuomintang, it will, however, never give up its continued intervention in and aggression on China, and continue its undermining of the cause of liberation and the construction of the Chinese People."¹

In the White Paper the US appears to them to be speaking with unwonted frankness:

"It [the White Paper] openly manifests American imperialist intervention in China. This point shows that imperialism has left the normal track. The great victorious Chinese revolution has caused a section, a clique within the American imperialist bloc to publish openly, certain true materials concerning their activities against the Chinese people and to draw reactionary conclusions from them in order to answer the attacks of another section, a clique; otherwise they cannot carry on."²

Even American generosity is intended to lay the basis for undermining the Communist regime:

"America has a lot of money, but unfortunately she is only willing to give it to the extremely corrupt Chiang Kai-shek reactionaries. It is said that, now and in the future, she is very willing to give some money to America's fifth columnists in China. However, she is not willing to give it to liberals or democratic individualists who are highly pedantic and insensible to favors, and is more unwilling to give to Communists.

"She can give, but on conditions. What are the conditions? The condition is to follow her. Americans have spread some relief flour in Peiping, Tientsin, and Shanghai.

1. FBIB, Daily Report, p. PPP-8, August 15, 1949, RESTRICTED.
2. Ibid., p. PPP-10, August 31, 1949, RESTRICTED.

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"See who is willing to stoop down and pick. The Americans have thrown out the bait. Those who swallow it will suffer a belly ache."¹

"To find grounds for aggression, Acheson reiterates a lot about 'Friendship' and piles up a lot of 'principles.' ... Compared with other imperialist countries, the United States paid more attention to spiritual aggressive activities which were extended from religious work to philanthropic and cultural work. According to certain statistics, the investments of American missionary and philanthropic organizations in China amounted to 41,900,000 United States dollars. Of this, medical expenditure occupied 14.7 percent while educational expenditure occupied 38.2 percent and religious activities forty-seven point one percent."²

3. The Appeal to "Democratic Individualists"

Secretary Acheson's letter transmitting the White Paper to the President expresses the belief that "ultimately the profound civilization and the democratic individualism of China will reassert themselves and she will throw off the foreign yoke." The potential attraction of this belief among the "neutral" intellectuals of China is acknowledged in the following Communist editorials:

"American aggressors call on certain Chinese -- called democratic individualists by Acheson -- to organize anti-Communist cliques so as to overthrow the people's democratic regime led by the Communist Party.

"Every patriotic Chinese and every Chinese with self-esteem must certainly not do this. The Chinese people will also certainly not allow this to happen."³

"A number of intellectuals still want to see for themselves. They think that the Kuomintang is bad but the Communist Party also may not be good, so they want to see for themselves. Some of them give

1. FBIB, Daily Report, p. PPP-5, August 22, 1949, RESTRICTED.
2. Ibid., p. BBB-1-2, September 1, 1949, RESTRICTED.
3. Ibid., p. PPP-10, August 15, 1949, RESTRICTED.

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verbal support to the Communist Party, but at the bottom of their hearts they are seeing for themselves. It is these people who entertain illusions about America. They do not want to distinguish between the American imperialists in (power) and the American people who are not in power."¹

"The slogan, 'prepare for struggle,' is addressed to those people who have still certain illusions on the question of relations between China and the imperialist countries, especially those between China and the United States. They are still passive and have not made up their minds on this question, and have not the determination for long struggle against American imperialism, and British imperialism, because they still entertain illusions about the United States.

"On this problem there is still a very big gap or quite a big gap between them and us."²

"Muddle-headed Chinese liberals or Chinese democratic individualists who are shortsighted, listen to Acheson, who is giving you lessons. He is your good teacher. The benevolence, righteousness, and virtue of America conceived by you have been swept away clean by Acheson. Is this not the case? Can you find the slightest bit of benevolence, righteousness, and virtue in the White Paper?"³

And, as if to show that truth has triumphed, the Communists exact the following confession from Tsinghua University professors, in a mass repudiation of Western beliefs:

"We admit that though we have done our part in the fight against American imperialism and the Kuomintang reactionaries, there were not a few among us who once entertained illusions about the American type of democracy."⁴

4. The False View of History Underlying the American Appeal to

"Democratic Individualism." The Communist editors go to great pains to

1. FBIB, Daily Report, p. PPP-15, August 16, 1949, RESTRICTED.
2. Ibid., p. PPP-17, August 16, 1949, RESTRICTED.
3. Ibid., p. PPP-4, August 22, 1949, RESTRICTED.
4. Ibid., p. BBB-4, August 29, 1949, RESTRICTED.

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point out the deficiencies of the historical theories on which the letter of transmittal is based:

"Class struggle. -- some classes are eliminated and some classes win victory. This is history. This is the history of several thousand years of civilization. Interpretation of history with this viewpoint is called historical materialism. The viewpoint opposite to this is historical idealism."¹

The Communists discover the same historical theories to be extant in China:

"Many Chinese liberal elements are old democratic elements or supporters of the so-called "democratic individualism" whom Truman, Marshall, Acheson, and Stuart are banking on and striving to win over...are often in a passive position...incorrect in their observation of problems. They are often incorrect in their observation of the American rulers, of the Kuomintang, of the Soviet Union, and also of the Chinese Communist Party. This is because they do not agree to see the method of historical materialism, to observe the problems."²

The American analysis of the causes of the Chinese revolution -- overpopulation and the impact of the West -- elicits a violent rebuttal by the Communists, who thereby acknowledge that these are their most pressing long-term problems:

"The Chinese should, furthermore, thank Acheson because he has talked nonsense at length about the modern history of China, and his viewpoint of history, the bourgeois idealistic outlook on history, is also held by a number of Chinese intellectuals. Refuting Acheson would, therefore, have the benefit of widening the vision of the broad masses of Chinese. It would be even more helpful to those who hold the same or certain similar views as Acheson.

1. FBIB, Daily Report, p. PPP-16, August 16, 1949, RESTRICTED.
2. Ibid., p. PPP-16, August 16, 1949, RESTRICTED.

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"What is Acheson's nonsensical talk about modern Chinese history? First of all, he attempts to explain the occurrence of the Chinese revolution through economic and (social) conditions of China. On this point, he tells many a fairy tale."¹

"According to Acheson, there is absolutely no way out for China. China has a population of 475 million, and this is an 'unbearable pressure.' Revolution or no revolution: The situation is hopeless. On this point, Acheson has placed great hopes which he does not disclose, but which have been disclosed frequently by American journalists. This is the so-called inability of the Communist Party of China to solve its economic problem. China will permanently be in chaos and the only way out is to rely on American flour, or in other words, to become an American colony."²

"The unemployment problem, that is, the feeding problem in Shanghai and other places is entirely the outcome of the brutal and ruthless exploitation of imperialism, feudalism, bureaucratic capitalism, and the Kuomintang reactionary Government. Under the People's Government, only a few years are needed to solve entirely the unemployment problem, or the feeding problem, in these places as in North China, Northeast China, and other places.

"The fact that China has a vast population is an excellent thing. Even if her population increases many fold, she fully has the means to deal with this -- this means is production. The absurd theory advanced by Western bourgeois economists like Malthus that the increase in food cannot keep up with the increase of population has not only been utterly refuted theoretically by Marxists, but has also been entirely refuted by facts in the post-revolution Soviet Union and liberated areas in China."³

"'Western technology' is Acheson's second cause in explaining the occurrence of the Chinese revolution. --- To Chinese ignorant of the cause of things, what Acheson said seems to be true. New Western ideas were imported to China and brought about revolution. Ideas can bring about revolution. This is typical historical idealism."⁴

1. FBIB, Daily Report, p. PPP-1, September 19, 1949, RESTRICTED.
2. Ibid., p. PPP-2, September 19, 1949, RESTRICTED.
3. Ibid., p. PPP-3, September 19, 1949, RESTRICTED.
4. Ibid., p. PPP-4, September 19, 1949, RESTRICTED.

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To deny the basis of "historical idealism" does not, however, obviate the danger of the democratic "ideas" expressed in the letter of transmittal. Thus the following spirited defense of the Communist form of government against the American charge of "totalitarianism":

"However, half of what Acheson says is wrong. To the people, the Communist-led Government of the people's democratic dictatorship is not dictatorial but democratic. This is a Government of the people which must most humbly and respectfully listen to the people and which is also, at the same time, the teacher of the people who educates them by means of self-education or self-criticism."¹

B. Evaluation of the Communist Reaction

In Communist China, the major tangible result of the issuance of the White Paper has been to end fence-sitting by so-called "neutral" or "liberal" politicians and intellectuals. The importance attached to the latter's denials of former American loyalties suggests that the Communists view the issuance of the White Paper not only as a convenient pretext for suppressing the "liberals" but also as a potent American move in the "battle for the Chinese mind."

The extent of the Communists' genuine concern may best be gauged from their reaction to the underlying concepts of the letter of transmittal. The Communists note the American doubt that Communism is the sole revolutionary force in contemporary China and will inevitably succeed. They rightly trace this doubt to the explanation of the origins

1. FBIB, Daily Report, p. PPP-13, August 31, 1949, RESTRICTED.

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of the Chinese revolution, which is summarized in the letter of transmittal in the following words: "By the beginning of the twentieth century, the combined force of overpopulation and new ideas set in motion that chain of events which can be called the Chinese revolution." Being sensitive to theory, especially one in basic contradiction to Communist theory, the Communists reply with all the weapons in their ideological arsenal.

They sneeringly label the American formulation as "bourgeois idealism" or "historical idealism," meaning that the US erroneously views "ideas" as more important moving forces in history than "material" conditions. Animating their charge, of course, is the fact that the US has rejected the basic Marxist concept of "revolution" as "continuous and deterministic class war." The Communists believe, for example, that modern China, through the catalytic agents of "capitalism" and "Western imperialism," is undergoing transition from "feudalism" to "socialism." This transition, according to their interpretation, has been and will be characterized by continuous class war, which the proletariat and its factotum, the Communist Party, will ultimately and inevitably win.

In contrast, the letter of transmittal questions whether the Communists or any other group have a "monopoly" of China's future. Modern China, it suggests without reference to "idealism" or "materialism," is the product of vast social forces that no government has yet controlled and that no ideology has yet explained. It implies, moreover, that, although the Communists are now the temporary masters of

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China, no action taken as yet guarantees their permanent retention of power. The letter of transmittal thus disputes the very concept of the Communist "mission" in China.

On the problem of "overpopulation," which the US regards as crucial to Communist survival, the Communists show themselves particularly sensitive. They deny that "overpopulation" has ever "caused" revolutions, thus indirectly reasserting their belief that revolution is the manifestation of perpetual class struggle. Moreover, in ascribing Chinese "overpopulation," or "unemployment" as they call it, to the now-terminated imperialist exploitation of China, the Communist writers reaffirm their faith that Chinese population will not be excessive when Chinese society is organized on Marxist principles. They accordingly dismiss the American formulation as the work of discredited Malthusian theorists. As a consequence of this line of thought, the Communists treat their current economic difficulties, which the US regards as symptoms of a deep-lying disease, as quickly remediable.

As for the issue of the "Western impact" on China, the usual Marxist clichés about "imperialism" stand the Communists in good stead. The West influenced China not through ideas, the Communists assert, but through the forms of "exploitation" that the West foisted on China. This imperialist exploitation set in motion those social forces which, in the "feudal" and "colonial" society, ultimately lead to "communism."

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The Communists also take pains to counteract the American appeal to "democratic individualism" and have embarked on the naive program of coercing leading non-Communists into defending and praising the Communist regime. This move, accompanied as it has been by a long rebuttal of the underlying concepts of the letter of transmittal to the White Paper, suggests that in issuing the White Paper the US may have scored an important psychological victory in China.

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